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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 AMMAN 002761

SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: JORDAN: 2009 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

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conference establishing the Regional Biometric Partnership Initiative, bringing together law enforcement, security, and forensic experts from twelve Middle Eastern countries. Jordan presented a tailored biometric software package and proposed the creation of a regional biometric database for known and suspected terrorists in the region to allow the efficient sharing of data between governments. The proposal won an endorsement in principle from other participants and could potentially do much to thwart terrorist travel and deny them safe havens.

[¶](#)10. Jordan welcomed U.S. training and assistance designed to strengthen security at its ports of entry. In December 2008, the U.S. and Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding for the Megaports Initiative, an agreement under which the U.S. National Nuclear Safety Administration works collaboratively with its Jordanian counterparts to equip seaports and other ports of entry with radiation detection equipment to prevent terrorists from acquiring, smuggling and using dangerous nuclear materials to develop a weapon of mass destruction or radiological dispersal devices. Similarly, Jordan has striven to develop a comprehensive strategic trade control program to better manage the transit and transshipment of items of proliferation concern. In support of this effort Jordan issued regulations governing the import and transit of dual-use items, established the interagency "Export Committee for Dual-Use Items," and participated in almost one dozen conferences and capacity-building activities.

[¶](#)11. (SBU) Jordan's security services remained intensely engaged against terrorist threats. As a result of their vigilance, several planned attacks were disrupted prior to execution. The State Security Court (SSC) has primary jurisdiction for terrorism cases and it maintained a substantial caseload during 2009. For example:

-- In March, three Jordanians were convicted and sentenced to 22 years for plotting a suicide car bombing against a Roman Catholic Church. The plotters had originally wanted to strike police facilities but shifted their focus to a Christian target after their surveillances revealed the difficulty of striking the police.
-- In April, four men were arrested and charged with plotting attacks in Israel in retaliation for the Israeli incursion into Gaza. The men were reportedly in possession of firearms at the time of their apprehension. The alleged leader of the cell, Usama Abu Kabir, had been released from U.S. custody at Guantanamo Bay in November 2007, after nearly six years of imprisonment.
-- In April, the SSC sentenced three men to five years' imprisonment for plotting and preparing attacks against Israeli

targets on behalf of HAMAS. Potential targets included the Israeli Embassy in Amman and border posts in Jordan Valley.

--In October, the SSC imposed sentences of 15 to 20 years on twelve [B2]Jordanian Al Qa'ida sympathizers for attempting to attack a Christian church in the northern city of Irbid, as well as a Christian cemetery in the same city. This group was also reportedly affiliated with an individual who fired upon a visiting Lebanese Christian choir in Amman in 2008.

[B3]

¶12. (SBU) In November, the Court of Cassation reduced the sentence of Muamar Yusef al-Jaghbir to 15 years incarceration for his role in the 2002 assassination of USAID Officer Thomas Foley. Al Jaghbir was convicted of playing a secondary role in the killing, and had been previously convicted and sentenced to death in July in the SSC, but the Court of Cassation reviewed the case and reduced the sentence on appeal. He was also credited with the six years al Jaghbir had already served in U.S. or Jordanian custody following his 2003 apprehension in Iraq. This ruling, however, is unlikely to result in al-Jaghbir's release in the future: he is also awaiting execution for his role in the August 2003 car bombing of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad that killed at least 14 people.

¶13. (SBU) Jordan has been intensely targeted by Al Qa'ida in the past and Al Qa'ida's leadership has repeatedly called for attacks against the Hashemite Government and Western interests in the country. In March 2009, for example, Al Qa'ida deputy Ayman Zawahiri called for extremists to "move into Jordan" from secure bases in Iraq in order to attack Jerusalem.

¶14. (SBU) Jordan is a strong partner in the struggle against terrorists, but its financial sector remains vulnerable to money-laundering and terrorism finance. Jordan has an Anti-Money Laundering (AML) law and in 2008, the Jordanian Securities Commission Board of Commissioners issued AML regulations for securities activities, a positive step toward defining obligated entities falling under the regulatory purview of the Commission. Furthermore, in 2009, Jordan began steps to implement a cross-border currency declaration form. Despite these measures, however, a Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) review identified deficiencies in 14 of 16 core and key FATF recommendations for combating money laundering and terrorist financing. Among the issues identified in the report are the absence of some predicate offenses in the existing AML statute, inadequate criminalization of terrorist financing, and the lack of

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legal procedures for freezing funds and assets of persons named pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1267 (for those suspected of funding Al-Qaeda or the Taliban).

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BEECROFT

[B1]This is the name on its letterhead.

[B2]Use numbers for 13 and above. Besides, in para 9, you use "twelve."

[B3]Bullets don't work in cables and in the past, if there were more than five spaces before the start of text, the system thought the cable was over. I don't know whether this remains an issue since cables are no longer scanned, but garbled next nevertheless remains the by-product of trying to format a cable like a document.